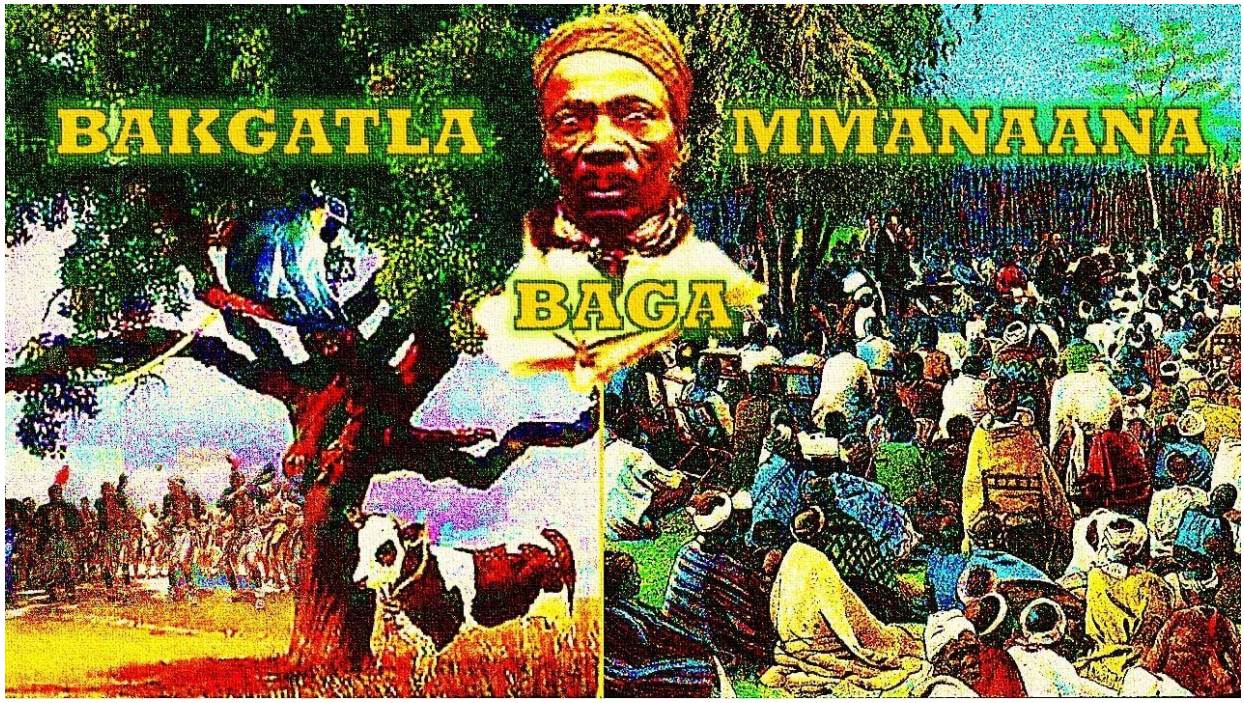

Ditso tsa Bogosi jwa Bakgatla bagaMmanaana

Prepared by Dr. Jeff Ramsay for Kgosi eKgolo Gobuamang II to mark the occasion of his installation, on October 1, 2001.

Introduction

The Bakgatla bagaMmanaana are the only branch of the Bakgatla that resides almost exclusively inside Botswana. BagaMmanaana dikgosi, who all trace their descent from great nineteenth-century Kgosi Mosielele I, are the traditional authorities of Moshupa, Thamaga, and Gamafikana. Past colonial era censuses indicate that up to 5% of Botswana's citizens owe traditional allegiance to the Bo-Mosielele dynasty, making the BagaMmanaana one of the country's larger morafe. In this respect, the Bakgatla bagaMmanaana are certainly the largest Setswana-speaking community not recognized by the current Sections 77-79 of the Constitution.

Early History

All Bakgatla traditionally claim “kgabo ya molelo le phologolo”, that is both fire and the monkey, as their totem. According to BagaMmanaana traditions, the ancient Bakgatla warriors were praised as the “flames” for they were said to consume their enemies like fire. They then opted for the monkey as a living symbol of the flame.

BagaMmanaana history has been characterized by a persistent quest for a place of their own since their split with the Bakgatla bagaKgafela by the mid-seventeenth century. According to some oral traditions this secession was precipitated by the refusal of three dikgotla led by dikgosana Kgatle, Kalaota, and Sua, to accept a female regent following the death of the BagaKgafela Kgosi Mokopu aTshukudu.

Led by Kgatle, the faction secretly left at night, taking many cattle with them. To avoid detection, they are said to have tied a red-white (naana) calf to a tree, which bellowed throughout the night reassuring the remaining Bakgatla that the cattle were safe. It is from various versions of this story that the name BagaMmanaana is said to originate.

For decades, the BagaMmanaana lived in different places in northwestern South Africa and Botswana (Kgabodukwe), before settling at Maanwane (near Dinokana) where they gained a

reputation for their expertise as ironworkers. Kgatle was succeeded by Mosiga, who begot Mphele, who begot Kowe, who begot Kontle, who begot Kalaota I, who begot Mphele II, who begot Kalaota II.

Under Kalaota II, the BagaMmanaana lived in what is now the Lehurutshe region as independent allies of the great Bahurutshe civilization at Kaditshwene (near Zeerust in South Africa's Madikwe region). But, during the first decade of the nineteenth century, they were defeated by and became vassals of, the expansionist Bangwaketse Kgosi Makaba II (ruled c.1790-1825), who settled them for the first time at Gamafikana.

Kalaota II was succeeded, c. 1820, by his son Kontle II, who married Makaba's daughter Berekonyane, the mother of Mosielele. Kontle had earlier taken as his Mogumagadi a woman named Mogatsauaka, daughter of Diale aKgogo aSau, who had begotten a son and heir named Pheko.

The BagaMmanaana fought alongside the Bangwaketse and Bakwena against Sebetwane's Bakololo (Bafokeng bagaPatsa) in the controversial battle of Losabanyana in 1825, which led to Makaba's death. A few months later Kontle joined Makaba's son Sebego in a successful 28 August 1826 attack on the Bakololo stronghold at Dithubaruba. This resulted in the expulsion of the Bakololo from southern Botswana. Thereafter the BagaMmanaana returned to Maanwane, where, c. 1835, Pheko succeeded Kontle.

The Reign of Mosielele

When in c. 1840 Pheko died without issue, dikgosana were sent to Gangwaketse to bring back Mosielele, who had remained with his maternal in-laws. In accordance with the custom of seantlo, Mosielele, who was proclaimed regent (Motshwareledi-Kgosi), entered the house of Pheko's widow, Kganyane aMongala aDiale, to raise sons on behalf of his late half-brother. Thus Pilane (1843-89) and Gobuamang I (1845-1940), along with four daughters, were born. Mosielele also begot male heirs from his sixth wife Ikalafeng, the daughter of Balete Kgosi Mokgosi I.

Under Mosielele's able leadership, the BagaMmanaana prospered throughout the 1840s. Maanwane became a major stopping point for hunters and traders following the 1842 establishment there of an L.M.S. mission. The mission station, which was the first in the region, was located at the adjacent Mabotsa hill. Its members were the Rev. Robert Edwards, his assistant the Rev. Dr. David Livingstone, and the Motswana evangelist Mebalwe (Mebaloe in old orthography) aMolehabangwe

After years of rising tension, BagaMmanaana peace and prosperity was broken on 17 August 1852, when Transvaal Boers attacked Maanwane. Seeing that the situation was hopeless Mosielele retreated to Dimawe, the

fortified stronghold of the Bakwena Kgosi Sechele I. There, on 30 August 1852, the BagaMmanaana joined the Bakwena, Bangwaketse, and Bakaa in resisting the Boers in an all-day battle. This fight occurred after Sechele refused to surrender Mosielele to the Boer Commandant-General Pieter Scholtz, saying:

"Wait till Monday. I shall not deliver up Mosielele: he is my child. If I am to deliver him up, I shall have to rip open my belly; but I challenge you on Monday to show which is the strongest man..."

In the aftermath of the Dimawe battle, the BagaMmanaana joined the Bakwena in falling back to Dithubaruba. There they were subsequently joined by other merafe: the Balete of Mokgosi, Batlhako of Mabe, Batlokwa of Semele and Matlapeng, the Bahurutshe of Mangope, and Masega. In the months that followed Mosielele's musket-wielding mephato, along with warriors from the other merafe took part in a united Batswana counterattack, which by January 1853 had driven the Boers back to Rustenburg.

After the restoration of peace, in February 1853, the BagaMmanaana remained with the Bakwena at Gakgatla. During this period, Pilane married Sechele's daughter Gagoangwe, who begot a son Baitirile. In 1863 they resettled at Moshupa, apparently because the Gakgatla river had run dry.

In 1870-71 the BagaMmanaana were divided by a bogosi dispute when Pilane claimed the throne from his ailing biological, but not customary, father Mosielele. Moshupa was temporarily abandoned when the larger faction accompanied Pilane to Kgabodukwe, while the loyal followers of Mosielele took refuge with the Bangwaketse Kgosi Gaseitsiwe at Gamafikana. Mosielele died in 1873 at Gamafikana, where a branch of the BagaMmanaana has since remained.

BagaMmanaana and Sebele I

Pilane’s seizure of power from the venerable Mosielele was in keeping with his times. By the 1870s, eastern Botswana was being reshaped by a new generation of ambitious and impatient young men. In Molepolole, Sechele had allowed his impetuous heir Sebele to seize the initiative. In Shoshong Khama III ousted his father Sekgoma I, who found refuge with Sechele’s vassal Thobega in Mmankgodi. In Ramoutswa Ikaneng, son of Makgosi I, looked for an opportunity to assert Balete independence from the Bangwaketse, while securing his own succession over his senior cousin Pule, whose followers would ultimately settle at Gabane.

But it was developments among the Bakgatla bagaKgafela in Mochudi that pushed the entire region towards inter-merafe or tribal warfare. The May 1875 death there of the BagaKgafela Kgosi Kgamanyane, who had sought Sechele's protection four years earlier, set up a power struggle between Linchwe I and half-brother Maganelo. With increasing numbers of BagaKgafela returning from the Diamond Fields around Kimberly with guns, both pretenders sought to secure their power base by establishing their morafe's independent control over the lands between the Ngotwane and Madikwe rivers.

The Bakwena were provoked by a series of BagaKgafela cattle raids in the region. Pressed by Sebele, Sechele sent seven of his mephato- Kgosidintsi's Maganelwa, Sekwene's Mannanne, Basiamang's Maganatsatsi, Serapelo's Maomantwa, Sebele's Mathubantwa, Tumagole's Matlolakgang, Sebogiso's Maganamokwa, and Motswasele's Mantswabisi- to force the BagaKgafela to submit.

Although the BagaMmanaana at Kgabodukwe had been spectators to the above events as they unfolded, Kgosi Pilane could not ignore his father-in-law, Sechele's, call to arms. And so, Khabe's Majapoo, Gobuamang's Mayakakgomo, along with Pilane's own Mafenya mephato joined in the Bakwena attack on Mochudi.

The resulting August 1875 Battle of Mochudi was unsuccessful. A few months later the BagaMmanaana under Pilane returned to Moshupa. This followed allegations by Sebele I that Pilane had failed to adequately support the Bakwena in the war against the Bakgatla bagaKgafela.

It was apparently Pilane's wife, Gagoangwe, who had convinced her brother Sebele of BagaMmanaana duplicity in the war against the BagaKgafela. She alleged that her already estranged husband had been turning a blind eye to secrete night meetings between dikgosana of the two Bakgatla merafe.

In the wake of his humiliating defeat at Mochudi, Sebele had grounds to fear a revival of succession claims on behalf of his elder brother Kgari. The seniority of the house of MmaSebele over the house of MmaKgari had been forced upon Sechele c.1840. Bakwena dikgosana had installed the future mother of Sebele and Gagoangwe, Selemang aKgorwe, over MmaKgari, the exiled Mongwato princess Mokgokgong aKgari, upon the death of Sechele's initial Mohumagadi aMogolo, Kebalepile aSegokotlo or MmaOpe. This arrangement had been subsequently sanctioned by MmaSebele's recognition as Sechele's sole "Christian wife."

Besides allegedly leaving the battlefield at Mochudi, the BagaMmanaana were accused of secretly conniving with Linchwe's BagaKgafela faction to assure the death of the rival pretender, Maganelo. The latter had met his death when BagaMmanaana led by Kgosi Pilane's brother Gobuamang had ambushed his raiding party near Thamaga in November 1875. It was said that his own men had abandoned Maganelo.

At Molepolole, Sechele was pressed into demanding that his son-in-law Pilane offer up Maganelo's head as a sign of continued loyalty. The BagaMmanaana, however, insisted that they were obligated to return the Mokgatla's corpse intact to his relatives. Besides not wanting to violate Setswana etiquette the BagaMmanaana kgotla feared Sechele's reputation as a sorcerer. While there can be no certainty as to whether there was active cooperation between the two Bakgatla groups, it is undoubtedly true that they were reluctant enemies.

After moving his people back to Moshupa from Kgabodukwe, Pilane attempted to adopt a neutral stance. But his independence was soon compromised by the growing cooperation between Sebele and the Bangwaketse Crown Prince Bathoen I. Following the remarriage of Gagoangwe to Bathoen, the Bakwena agreed to give up their claims to Moshupa.

Pilane was remarried to Mogatsamokama, the daughter of the then late Bangwato Kgosi Macheng. Their son was thus named Kgabophuti.

BagaMmanaana at Moshupa 1880-1930

For many decades relations between the Bangwaketse and BagaMmanaana remained good, with the latter regarding themselves as junior allies but not subjects of the former. In the latter capacity, BagaMmanaana warriors joined the Bangwaketse in their disastrous November 1881 attack on the Balete at Ramotswa.

In 1889 Pilane died and was succeeded by his son Baitirile. The latter only ruled for a decade before dying without an heir. As a result, from 1899-1912 Gobuamang served as regent for Kgabophuti.

Kgosi Kgabophuti ruled briefly from 1912-18. Only one mophato, Malwelakgosi, was initiated during his reign. This regiment was the first not to be sent to bogwera or traditional initiation school. Instead, many of its members saw military service in World War I.

From the limited evidence available, the discarding of bogwera appears to have been a reflection of Kgabophuti's religious convictions, rather than dictates of his colonial overlord Kgosi Seepapitso II. Earlier, in 1904, Gobuamang had defied Seepapitso's father, Bathoen I, by allowing the BagaMmanaana to hold bogwera. This had led to a colonial inquiry, resulting in “Gobbleman,” as the British by now called Gobuamang, being warned by Jules "Ramaeba" Ellenberger to obey his Chief. Bathoen's annoyance had been aggravated by the fact that boys from Kanye had attended the Moshupa school.

Under Kgabophuti, Moshupa’s internal peace was also modestly disrupted by disputes over possession of the central (now UCSSA) church building between supporters of the L.M.S., backed by the Kgosi, and breakaway Mothowagae church, which continued to have Gobuamang as its patron. The building, itself, had been constructed by mephato during Gobuamang’s regency.

Notwithstanding the property dispute, the Mothowagae church continued to be tolerated. Its local moruti was a former L.M.S. evangelist of Batlhaping origin named Diphokwe, who eventually affiliated himself with the Lobatse-based African Methodist Episcopal mission of the Rev. Gabashane. Another local evangelist named Thupane, however, encountered official opposition to his efforts to also introduce the Apostolic Faith Mission into the village.

With Kgabophuti's sudden death in 1918, succession passed to Gobuamang. The early deaths of both of Pilane’s sons inevitably gave rise to some suspicions. But, Kgabophuti is known to have

been a victim of the great 1918 “Spanish Influenza” pandemic (known ka Setswana as “Leroborobo”), which is estimated to have killed about 5% of Botswana’s population at the time, as well as some twenty million people worldwide.

The first years of Gobuamang’s second reign were not marked by any serious controversy. The rift in the church was finally healed in 1926 when the independents agreed to reunite with the L.M.S. This step helped Gobuamang to unite the community behind various self-help efforts, which included the building of a Bakgatla bagaMmanaana "National Office” as well as schools.

Notwithstanding the 1904 bogwera controversy, before the 1928 installation of Bangwaketse Kgosi Bathoen II, there had not been any serious conflict between the people of Kanye and Moshupa. In both their

fields and at the mines of South Africa, Bangwaketse and BagaMmanaana worked and socialized together.

Gobuamang, Bathoen II, and the British

Generational conflict may have contributed to the subsequent struggle that occurred between Bathoen II and Gobuamang. The former was only nineteen when he was installed as Kgosi eKgolo of the Bangwaketse, by which time Gobuamang was already eighty-three.

The Mokgatla mogolo welcomed the Mongwaketse's coronation in the belief that he would be allowed to continue to govern the affairs of Moshupa without interference. But this was not to be. Though young, Bathoen came to bogosi determined to rule with a strong hand. The assassination of his father, Kgosi Seepapitso II, as well as the influence of his uncle, Bangwato Kgosi Tshekedi Khama, may have encouraged him in his desire to assert his authority. In this respect, he was certainly mindful of the internal challenges faced by his neighbour Sebele II as well as Tshekedi, while confronting the continued factional conflict within his merafe that had influenced him to abandon plans to attend University before assuming bogosi.

The trouble between Gobuamang and Bathoen began over health services. In 1930, the Seventh Day Adventist medical missionaries reached an agreement with Bathoen to expand health services in his reserve in return

for a fixed annual payment. Having consulted only with his kgotla at Kanye, Bathoen imposed a levy of two pounds two shillings on every adult male within his reserve. Gobuamang refused to collect the levy, which was strongly opposed by his community. The SDA medical mission was then only serving Kanye. But, Bathoen would not listen, demanding that the BagaMmanaana pay. But, Gobuamang continued to refuse, telling Bathoen that while the rocks at Moshupa might belong to the Mongwaketse, he alone was the Kgosi of the Bakgatla bagaMmanaana.

Deeply angered Bathoen decided to remove Gobuamang. In this desire, he had the support of the colonial state as represented by Kanye's Resident Magistrate, Alan Cuzen. The Magistrate sent a report to his superior in Mafikeng, the Resident Commissioner Charles Rey, emphasizing the need to uphold young Bathoen's authority to collect tax.

The first act in the resulting tragedy occurred on Wednesday, 27 August 1930. From the diary of Charles Rey, for the same day:

"On Wednesday morning was the great Kgotla meeting, chief Bathoen, and all the Bangwaketse Tribe. I got into full uniform and with Ninon [Rey's wife] drove off to the meeting where we were received in a great state. It was a wonderful gathering— N[inon] and I and the Cuzens in the midst of nearly 2,000 natives, who had come from miles. It was a tremendously animated meeting as there was bad trouble between Bathoen the young Chief, Kgampu [Kamodi] an ex-councilor of the old Chief [i.e. Motshwareledi-Mahumagadi Ntebogang Ratshosa], and Gobuamang the subordinate chief of a branch of the Bakgatla tribe...

"Kgampu had been exiled and wanted to come back: he wouldn't stay in his place of exile, and the tribe asked me to force him to stay there, which I agreed to do.

"Gobuamang pronounced 'Hobuaman', or as my predecessor called him, Gobbleman was a much more difficult problem. He is a stubborn old man of 70 [by then actually 85] who has defied the Chiefs of the Bangwaketse and three Resident Commissioners, my predecessors) for twenty years. He was in the Kgotla, and after he had been vigorously denounced he got up and said that he didn't recognize Bathoen as Chief of the people — that he, Gobuamang, was Chief of the people, that is what he said, and then he talked about guns going off!"

The official Kgotla minutes, translated into English, show that Gobuamang spoke only briefly on two occasions during the meeting, which was otherwise dominated by Bathoen and a handful of loyal dikgosana. In his

opening statement, Gobuamang complained to Rey that Bathoen, unlike Ntebogang and previous Bangwaketse rulers, was not paying him for collecting Hut Tax and Native Fund levies, while also trying to force him to go against his people's wishes by collecting the new health levy. Later the Mokgatla stood up again to deny that he had ever insulted Bathoen while noting threats, which had been made against his community:

"Last time I was present at a discussion in this Kgotla, only a few days ago, guns were mentioned and people spoke of pulling Moshupa down."

It is clear from the above that Rey, who did not understand Setswana and was otherwise not feeling well at the time, had misunderstood Gobuamang. Ironically, he had already issued Cuzen a stern instruction that no community should be forced to pay Bathoen's levy.

Comfortable in his ignorance, Rey decided that Gobuamang's son Kgabosetso should immediately take over as the Moshupa sub-chief, while his father would be detained in Kanye "to live under the protection of the Chief Bathoen and the eye of the Government." In his diary he added for good measure:

"They accepted my dictum, and later on, after all the speeches were finished and we left the Kgotla, they gave us a tremendous reception. Natives don't understand anything except an order: they like to be governed, and as long as it is fair and just the more despotically one governs the better."

Drinking his cocktail on Cuzen's veranda Rey believed he had permanently ended the BagaMmanaana problem. In fact, the "Gobbleman war" was about to begin.

It is uncertain whether Gobuamang knew that the blustering new Resident Commissioner, Rey, had no legal authority to summarily order him to remove to Kanye. He never raised the issue; his stubborn sense of justice was enough for him to remain at his kgotla. In this, he had the full support of his morafe, who boycotted Bathoen's meetings.

On the 29th of September 1930, the Officer Commanding the Kanye Police set off the apprehend Gobuamang, accompanied by one of Bathoen's mophato. But, the BagaMmanaana surrounded their Kgosi, stating that he could only be turned over to British, but not Bangwaketse, authority.

When Cuzen rode into Moshupa the next morning, Gobuamang had disappeared. Rey then authorized the taking of hostages, including Gobuamang's heir Kgabosetso, and the dispatch of armed search parties.

Meanwhile, blissfully unaware that he a fugitive, Gobuamang was traveling to Mafikeng, where he hoped to see Rey. On Friday morning Cuzen's assistant, Langton, found him at Ramotswa, having breakfast with Kgosi Seboko. The Mokgatla agreed to surrender on the condition that his complaints were forwarded to the Resident Commissioner.

With a police escort, Cuzen returned to Moshupa. Arriving at Kgosing, he had the men present file past and salute a Union Jack.

Thereafter it quickly became apparent that Bathoen, with Cuzen's connivance, was ignoring Rey's order that no one be forced to pay health levy. At this point, Gobuamang might have been quickly released, had Cuzen not alerted Rey to the supposed danger of Kgabosetso's eldest son Diratsame (Philemon/Filomane), who had supposedly returned from his studies at Adams College in Natal enthused with radical ideas. It was further suggested that Gobuamang was grooming Diratsame to succeed him, rather than Kgabosetso.

Rey then offered to let Gobuamang go if he agreed to relinquish power to his son. This was refused.

For the next year, matters remained deadlocked. Neither Bathoen nor Rey wanted Gobuamang ruling the BagaMmanaana, but neither was eager to assume responsibility for him in Kanye. In January 1931 Rey washed his hands of the affair by formally handing Gobuamang over to Bathoen, claiming that the matter could then be resolved through "native law and custom".

By this time many in Kanye as well as Moshupa wanted to end Gobuamang's detention, but Bathoen initially resisted the pressure. Finally, in September 1931, Bathoen accepted the BagaMmanaana offer to pay a fine of twenty-five cattle, as a gesture to secure Gobuamang's release. Believing that the now eighty-six-year-old Gobuamang's health was failing, Bathoen allowed him to return to Moshupa.

Harmony between the two rulers remained elusive. Within months Bathoen tried to punish Gobuamang again. The Mongwaketse was angered when he summoned the Mokgatla to meetings in Kanye but received only representatives instead. In April 1932 Bathoen, accompanied by Cuzen,

went to Moshupa to demand that Gobuamang and twelve of his leading councilors leave the Bangwaketse Reserve.

For the sake of peace, Gobuamang said he was willing to go. At the end of the meeting, all of the BagaMmanaana present said that they too would go with their Kgosi. Several weeks later the Bakwena Kgosi Kgari Sechele told the colonial government that the people of Moshupa were welcome to relocate to Kweneng.

In the winter of 1932 one colonial officer, Claude Ledeboer tried to restore reason. Upon taking over from Cuzen at Kanye, he talked to Gobuamang's followers, detecting both the opportunity for compromise and the potential for tragedy in the unfolding events. Gobuamang asked: “Why could not the Mongwaketse settle his differences with me without bringing in the government.” From Serowe Kgosi Tshekedi wrote his nephew, Bathoen, asking much the same question.

In a memo, Ledeboer was able to convince Rey to postpone any removals pending an inquiry, originally scheduled for August 1932. But, by the time the inquiry was finally held in December, the task of reconciling the Bogosi jwa BagaMmanaan le Bangwaketse had been complicated by Bathoen's rash resort to force. In October he led a mophato into Moshupa to establish a Mongwaketse headman over Bo-Mosielele. The invaders were surrounded, disarmed, and returned to Kanye in absolute humiliation.

For the BagaMmanaana, the Mongwaketse had been exposed as a toothless crocodile. For the chairman of the subsequent colonial inquiry, Vivian "Maeba" Ellenberger, the issue at stake was thus the very survival of indirect rule. He argued that it was the paramount responsibility of the colonial state to uphold the authority of its chiefs over their subjects.

After some hesitation, Rey agreed that “the troublesome wretch Bathoen” would indeed have to be supported. From his diary 27 March 1933:

“Off at 7:30 in 'Topsy" [Rey's auto] for Kanye where I have to deal with that old villain Gobbleman! There was a huge gathering of Bangwaketse tribesmen, and several hundred Bakgatla had come in with Gobbleman from Moshupa. I made a long speech and told Gobbleman what I thought of him- that he was an obstinate foolish old man, that he had caused trouble for thirty years; and that he was no longer headman of the Bakgatla, that he was to leave Moshupa and come and live at Kanye, and that if he was not there in a week I should send police and bring him in by force. I appointed his son Kgabosetso as headman, and said if there was any further trouble, he would be dealt with drastically like the rebels at

Serowe [backers of Gasetshware aSekgoma's claims to Bangwato bogosi] who got seven- and eight-years hard labour...

"The old devil was absolutely unrepentant, and said he wasn't going to come in, and if I wanted him, we could jolly well fetch him, or words to that effect."

On Saturday morning, 8 April, Rey's deputy, Capt. Reilly, accompanied by the new Kanye magistrate, Capt. Mangan and thirteen senior Protectorate Police officers and NCOs arrived in Moshupa to arrest Gobuamang.

Outside the Kgotla the armed police were surrounded by several hundred BagaMmanaana, who poked them into submission with wooden knitting needles.

Rey was now feared the worst. He lacked enough men and arms to put down a full-scale rebellion by Gobuamang's estimated one thousand potentially armed men. He could ask the neighboring South African and/or Southern Rhodesian governments for military support, but such a step would be a public confession of imperial weakness.

Thus, in April 1933 Bechuanaland Resident Commissioner Charles Rey appeared to be in a corner. Having seemingly pushed the BagaMmanaana into a state of insurrection he soon realised that his police lacked the capacity to restore order.

Not one to compromise, Rey proposed to solve the dilemma by bombing Moshupa from the air. The more he thought about the idea the more convinced he was of its advantages. It would be inexpensive, put no European lives or property at risk (conveniently Moshupa's two resident traders were both Asians), and would not destroy permanent buildings as the village mostly consisted of "mud huts". He also believed the bombing would have a good moral effect on native opinion in general, observing:

"The lesson which would thus be taught to these people would, of course, have repercussions throughout the territory, an effect which is badly needed...The destruction of the village of Moshupa is entirely in accord with native law and custom and one which was the normal consequence of disobedience of the order of a chief. It would be thoroughly understood and seen as just by natives generally."

Rey's proposal was endorsed by the High Commissioner in Pretoria, Sir Herbert Stanley, and forwarded to London. Meanwhile, Moshupa was

sealed off and the airstrips at Mochudi and Gaberones Camp prepared to receive the Royal Air Force.

But, London rejected Rey's plan. RAF bombings of African civilians had gone out of fashion during the 1920s following international outcries over incidents in Somalia and Namibia. Instead, Rey was authorised to seek armed support, including armoured vehicles, from Southern Rhodesia.

Wiser heads also emerged locally. Rey was approached by two Dutch Reformed Church Ministers, the Rev. Johan Reyneke of Mochudi, and Mr. J. C. Knoble, the retired missionary turned trader in Molepolole, who offered to act as mediators. Rey was skeptical but allowed them to pass through police lines to the besieged BagaMmanaana.

At Moshupa Gobuamang was eager to spare his village by surrendering himself. Over the objections of his people, he drove away in Knoble's car, never to return.

Founding of Thamaga

After six months imprisonment in Gaberones gaol cell, which had previously housed the deposed Batawana Kgosi Sekgoma Letsholathebe, Gobuamang went to Molepolole, where he was given permission to settle with his followers at Thamaga. Throughout the second half of 1935 some 5000 BagaMmanaana, about half the village, relocated from Moshupa to Thamaga. With his blessing his son, Kgabosetso, remained behind to rule at Moshupa.

When Gobuamang died in 1940 at the age of 95, Kgabosetso's son Letlole succeeded him at Thamaga. Like his grandfather, Letlole was a strong ruler, most notably in the mid-1950s, when he was sentenced to imprisonment by Bakwena Kgosi Kgari aSechele II. Letlole appealed to the High Court, which overturned Kgari's judgment. He served on the African Advisory, African, and Legislative Councils, before becoming a member of the House of Chiefs after independence.

Thamaga dikgosi today trace descent through Kgabosetso's senior wife Kgomotso aSewagodimo. In 1940 Letlole's elder brother Diratsame refused to take the throne, but succession has now been restored through his son, Kgosi Gobuamang (II) Julian Dintlogetswe Gobuamang. Kgosi Mosielele II at Moshupa traces his descent through Kgabosetso's second wife Diralanang aPodile.

Appendix MEPHATO YA BAKGATLA BAGA MMANAANA (1820-1941)

Early Dikgosi – Kgosi Kgatle, who broke away from Kgafela, was succeeded by Mosiga, who begot Mphele, who begot Kowe, who begot Kontle, who begot Kalaota I, who begot Mphele II, who begot Kalaota II.

Kgosi/Mophato / Moeteledipele

Kgosi Kontle (c 1820-35) aKalaota II aMphela II aKalaota aKontle
Matloladibe [not Matoadibe] (?) – Keatlhotswe aThokgwe
Magatakgomo (?) – Senone aKontle
Malosatau (?) – Rasibi aKontle
Kgosi Pheko aKontle (c1835-40)
Malokwana (?) – Kontle aSetilo aKontle

Kgosi Mosielele aKontle (1840-71)
Majapoo (?) – Khabe aSetilo aKontle
Mafenya (1864) – Pilane aPheko
Mayakakgomo (1869) – Gobuamang aPheko

(NB: While Pilane and Gobuamang were recognised as the sons of Pheko, their biological father was Mosielele who had "raised seed", i.e. seantlo, on his deceased brother's behalf, Gobuamang in his later years identified himself as Mosielele's son.)

Kgosi Pilane aPheko (1871-89)
Mapodisi (?) – Mokgatlaemang aMonare aSebego aKalaota
Maakathata (?) – Gabautlwe
Kgosi Baitirile aPilane (1889-99)
Mabeelwa (1890) – Baitirile aPilane
Maabantwa (1892) – Kgabosetso aGobuamang

Kgosi Gobuamang aPheko/Mosielele (regency 1899-1912)
Matsayakgang (1901) – Senona aGobuamang
Manyaola (1905) – Mochanyana aMokgobotsi aKontle
Maganakgosi (1911) – Mahume aSegomela aKalaota

Kgosi Kgabophuti aPilane (1912-18)
Malwelakgosi (1916) – Jack aMoatlhaping aSefemo aSebegonyane aKalaota

Kgosi Gobuamang aPheko/Mosielele (1918-40)
Masibatsebe (1921) – Motlhaodi aKedumetse aMonare

Magalatladi (1927) – Filimon aKgabosetso aGobuamang le Kaloata aRrasejo aSegomelo
Madube (1931) – Rankurata aMoatlhaping aSefemo aSegomelo aKalaota

Kgosi Kgabosetso aGobuamang (d. 1945)
Maganamokgwa (1941) – Matlhare aMoatlhaping aSefemo